

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8654

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

DIA WASHDC

COMUSMACHTAI BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3662

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJECT: COMMUNIST TERRORISTS ATTACK DISTRICT POLICE STATION
IN SURAT THANI

REF: BANGKOK 2807 (DTG 091021Z FEB 76)

1. THE FEBRUARY 18 ISSUE OF BANGKOK WORLD CARRIED A FRONT PAGE ARTICLE ABOUT A COMMUNIST TERRORIST (CT) ATTACK AGAINST THE PHRA SAENG DISTRICT PROVINCIAL POLICE (PP) STATION IN SURAT THANI PROVINCE ON FEBRUARY 17. REPORTEDLY, ABOUT 15 CT ATTACKED THE PP STATION FOR APPROXIMATELY TWO HOURS BEFORE THEY BROKE CONTACT AND FLED INTO THE JUNGLE AT 2200 HOURS. THE 45 PP AND BORDER PATROL POLICE AT THE STATION PREVENTED THE CT FROM OVERRUNNING IT, SUFFERING ONE WOUNDED IN THE ACTION. A COMBINED MILITARY AND POLICE PATROL WENT AFTER THE CT EARLY ON THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 18.

2. THE INCIDENT WAS THE THIRD CT ATTACK AGAINST A DISTRICT CAPITOL SINCE THE FIRST ENCOUNTER BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND CT FORCES IN AUGUST 1965. THE FIRST AND SECOND ATTACKS AGAINST DISTRICT SEATS OCCURRED ON JANUARY 23 IN NAKHON SI THAMMARAT AND JANUARY 25 IN UDORN (SEE REFERENCE).

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ALTHOUGH THE 150-MAN FIGURE MAY BE INFLATED, THE INCIDENT

REPRESENTS A CONTINUATION OF CT MULTI-COMPANY OPERATIONS AGAINST ISOLATED INSTALLATIONS IN CT-AFFECTED AREAS OF THAILAND. CT ACTIVITY IN PHRA SAENG DISTRICT OVER THE PAST FOUR MONTHS HAS BEEN MINIMAL, MOSTLY CONSISTING OF NON-VIOLENT INCIDENTS AND SIGHTINGS. THE ON-GOING COUNTER-INSURGENCY CAMPAIGN IN BAN NA SAN AND WIANG SA DISTRICTS OF SURAT THANI HAS ACCOUNTED FOR THE GREAT MAJORITY OF VIOLENT INCIDENTS IN THE PROVINCE SINCE OCTOBER 1975.

3. OTHER DISTRICT CAPITOLS IN PARTS OF THE NORTH, NORTHEAST AND SOUTH ARE AS VULNERABLE TO ATTACKS BY OVERWHELMING NUMBERS OF CT AS THE THREE HIT SO FAR THIS YEAR. THE FACT THAT IN ONLY ONE OF THE ATTACKS WERE THE CT ABLE TO OVERRUN THE DISTRICT POLICE STATION IS NOT THOUGHT TO BE SIGNIFICANT SINCE THE CT GAIN INVALUABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFIT FROM SUCH OPERATIONS AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL, EVEN IF MILITARILY UNSUCCESSFUL (AND ONLY THREE POLICEMEN WERE WOUNDED IN THE THREE ATTACKS). UNLESS THE ATTACKING CT ARE HURT, SUCH INCIDENTS COULD CONTINUE TO OCCUR IN CT-AFFECTED AREAS.

WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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